



Ottoman ritual soundscapes

Histories, Spaces and Heritages at the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Greek State

Friday, 15 September, French School at Athens,
21.00

Music Ensemble

Y. Barış Bal	tanbur, yaylı tanbur, saz, voice
Evangelia Chaldaeaki	voice
Eleni Kallimopoulou	kemençe
Gerasimos Papadopoulos	voice
Panagiotis Poulos	lavta
Markos Skoulios	ney
Stratis Skourkeas	bendir

Music Programme

Haddesh Ke-Kedem (Hicâz Hümâyûn)

Yeeme Levavi (Segâh Peşrev), music: Neyzen Yusuf Paşa (1821-1884), lyrics: Israel Ben-Moshe
Bülbül Uşşakı and Muhayyer Tekke Saz Semai

Ege Be-Toratheha (Uşşâk)

Perde kaldırma (ritual group improvisation)

Suite of *ilâhîs* (Bektaşî hymns)

Sabâ Peşrev (from Sabâ Âyin-i Şerifi), Tanbûrî Osman Bey (1816-1885)

Azkir Hasde (Sabâ)

Gamınla dil fikâr olsun (Selmek Şarkı), Haham Nesim Siviliya (d. 1930?)

Neden kalbim seni sevdi (Acemaşiran Şarkı), İsak Varon (1884-1962)

Ay mansevo (Sephardic song), recorded version by Rabbi Izak Algazi (1889-1950)

εφα

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Intercommunal relations

This concert explores the sonic universe of Ottoman rituals as spaces for intercommunal and cross-confessional contact and interaction. Although historiography has often represented early modern multi-confessional empires as paradigms of 'harmonious coexistence', in reality these constituted more complicated and diverse societies. In urban centres, everyday experience was a mix of religious toleration and tension, and inter-religious connection and rivalry. Hierarchies were structured on administrative privileges and restrictions, defining both the communities' and individuals' position, while at the same time allowing space for cross-faith exchange and familiarity.

Within this regulated and hierarchical pre-modern universe, music offered opportunities both in terms of marking boundaries between and of forging ties across the various communities. Since the 18th c., Ottoman urban music in particular became a shared cultural space for Muslims, Christians and Jews, who at the same time maintained their own religion, language, literature and cultural institutions (Feldman 2000: 54). Cultural interaction also marked the interrelation between secular urban music and the liturgical musical traditions of the communities. Many musicians were highly versed and contributed as instrumentalists, singers or composers in both Ottoman urban music and their community's religious music. In Ottoman urban centres, Muslim *müezzins* and *hafız* (reciters of the Quran), members of various Sufi orders such as the Mevlevi order, Christian chanters and Jewish cantors, listened attentively to each others' liturgical music while often interacting as composers, singers or instrumentalists in the secular contexts of Ottoman urban music. Mevlevi convents, the Mevlevihanes, were important centres for the performance and transmission of Ottoman urban music, which shares central aspects of rhythm, melody, structure and form with the music that accompanies the Mevlevi ritual (*âyin-i şerifi*).

References and Repertoire Sources

- Feldman, Walter. 2000. 'Ottoman Music'. Accompanying notes in *Osmanlı Türk Müziği Antolojisi, Lâlezâr topluluğu*. İstanbul: Kültür A.Ş., İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi
- Jackson, Maureen. 2013. *Mixing Musics. Turkish Jewry and the Urban Landscape of a Sacred Song*. Stanford: Stanford University Press
- Seroussi, Edwin. 2013. 'Judeo-Islamic Sacred Soundscapes: The "Maqamization" of Eastern Sephardic Jewish Liturgy'. In *Jews and Muslims in the Islamic World*, edited by Bernard D. Cooperman and Tsevi Zohar, 279-302. Bethesda, Md. : University Press of Maryland
- Seroussi, Edwin. 2009. 'Towards a Historical Overview of the Maftirim Phenomenon'. Accompanying notes in *Maftirim: Türk-Sefarad sinagog ilahileri*. İstanbul: Gözlem Gazetecilik Basın ve Yayın.

Musical interactions

Tonight's program showcases the relations of Jewish musicians with the Ottoman court and the Mevlevi order. The 'sound of the synagogue', containing biblical cantillation, psalmodic formulae and prayer recitations, developed in parallel with paraliturgical practices often characterized by the incorporation of elements from the musics of the surrounding non-Jewish societies (Seroussi 2013). In Jewish Ottoman communities in particular, there developed a paraliturgical tradition in close relation to Ottoman music. The vocal choir Maftirim in Edirne, like Hallel vezimra in Thessaloniki and other similar choirs in Smyrna (İzmir) and İstanbul, followed a long tradition of setting Jewish religious poetry to old and contemporary compositions of Ottoman urban music, for performances in the synagogue and in paraliturgical gatherings (Seroussi 2009, Jackson 2013).

The music of masters like Tanburi Osman, a native of İstanbul who was musically nurtured in the Mevlevi environment, and İsak Varon from Gallipoli, who spent part of his life in Thessaloniki working as a lawyer, form a sonic network that connects the Mevlevihane near the Vardar Gate (Vardar Kapısı) in Thessaloniki to that in Kulekapı in İstanbul. The melodies of the Bektaşî hymns, the *ilâhîs*, and those of popular Sephardic songs of Thessaloniki and İstanbul echo the social and spiritual needs of the various communities, giving us access to the field of intercommunal contacts and interaction and thus broadening our understanding of the complexities and challenges of the Ottoman urban world.

*Eleni Kallimopoulou · Kostis Kornetis
Daphne Lappa · Panagiotis C. Poulos*

